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ABSTRACT

Progress made in the DARE Project, begun in 1965 with the purpose of producing a "Dictionary of American Regional English," is described. Phase 1, the collection of necessary materials, has been completed. Ten Spoken Sources of this material and 12 Written Sources are listed and annotated. It is estimated that the grand total of items in the file will be more than 2,500,000, and the number of entries in the Dictionary should be over 100,000. Phase 2, editing and producing "DARE," is scheduled for completion in 1976. When completed, DARE is expected to have two distinct parts: (1) a conventional alphabetical word-list; and (2) a summary of the data from 1,000 questionnaires completed by communities in 50 states. A short list is provided of words that do not appear in existing dictionaries which DARE will treat. A sample of what the data summary will list is provided. (DB)

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The DARE Project

at the End of 1970

The "DARE Project" began officially on July 1, 1965, as a cooperative project supported by the U. S. Office of Education and the University of Wisconsin, and under sponsorship of the American Dialect Society, with Professor F. G. Cassidy as Director-Editor. Its purpose is to produce a Dictionary of American Regional English.

This was planned from the beginning in two phases: Phase 1, collecting the necessary materials, and Phase 2, editing them to produce the actual dictionary. The USOE-UW cooperation was to cover phase 1, 1965-1970. That part is now nearly completed and phase 2 ready to begin. The target date for completion of the Dictionary is 1976 -- the bicentennial of American Independence -- an appropriate date for the appearance of a long-needed work on American language. The project has been accepted by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission.

PHASE 1 - What has been accomplished.

In the five years of Phase 1, a massive effort was made to gather as much as possible of the most relevant data on American regional English, both from spoken and written sources.

Spoken Sources

1. DARE Questionairs. A fresh collection has been made of lexical data from native speakers of American English representing 1,000 communities in 50 states. These communities have been chosen as broadly representative of the stable part of the U. S. population both rural and urban. Local informants (INF) in the chosen communities have been interviewed by DARE field-workers (FW) between November 1965 and late 1970, using our own questionair (QR), which contains about 1,400 questions covering the chief concerns in the daily life of most people throughout the country.

   In the QR every question is framed exactly and the FWs were instructed to ask each question as framed. This has produced as high a degree of comparability in the responses as it is possible to get: we will be able to correlate differences of usage with geography and with relevant facts about the informants such as age, sex, race, degree of education, occupation,

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all of which are stored, with their responses, in our computer file. This mass of data alone, about 2,300,000 items, will furnish a synchronic picture of American language such as has not existed hitherto. (See below, Data Summary.)

2. DARE Tapes. Our FWs have made over 3,000 new tape recordings of native speech in every part of the country. These will not only furnish the basis for a picture of contemporary regional American pronunciation (something which does not exist at present in a synchronic form), but thousands of lexical items not covered by the QR.

3. L.A.N.E. Workbooks. From the margins of the workbooks of the Linguistic Atlas of New England we have gathered perhaps 2,000 items that were not put on the L.A.N.E. maps.

4. L.A.N.E. Disks. We are excerpting the 609 disks in the Miles L. Hanley Collection (University of Wisconsin) which record the speech of 386 chiefly elderly people in 1933-34.

5. Other Linguistic Atlas Materials. For Wisconsin we have 50 field records made by F. G. Cassidy in 1940-41. The much larger collection of the Linguistic Atlas of California and Nevada has also been put at our disposal by Professor David Reed, Northwestern University.

6. The Gordon Wilson Collection. A thoroughly digested collection of the usages of 225 local people in the area of Mammoth Cave National Park, collected by direct interview with and without tape recordings over a period of about 30 years by Professor Gordon Wilson of Western Kentucky University. This generous gift adds some 9,000 items to the DARE file.

7. The Joseph S. Hall Collection. A fully annotated collection of the usages of 250 local people in the area of Great Smoky Mountain National Park, collected by direct interview with and without tape recordings over a period of about 35 years by Professor Joseph Sargent Hall of Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California. This generous gift adds some 2,000 items to the DARE file.

8. Tobacco Terms. A comparative collection of tobacco growing terms as used in the 8 major tobacco-growing states, made as a special project for DARE by Professor Mary Ritchie Key,

University of California-Irvine, in 1967, by direct interview of more than 50 tobacco farmers, handlers, and dealers. This source adds about 300 items to the file.

9. Coal Miners' Terms. A comparative collection of the occupational terms of coal-miners in the 10 chief coal-mining states, made by Dr. Dennis R. Preston, Ohio State University, in 1967-68, by direct interview. This source adds about 200 items to the DARE file.

10. Miscellaneous. Many smaller collections of local terms, or single items, have been sent in from the most varied sources, or gathered in passing by DARE FWs and others. This adds probably over 5,000 items.

Written Sources

1. Dialect Notes. Published by the American Dialect Society from 1890-1939: 6 volumes. One hundred word lists and some special studies from 34 states, mostly east of the Mississippi River. These will furnish perhaps 10,000 items for the file.

2. P.A.D.S. The Publication of the American Dialect Society series (50 issues to date) contains 30 usable word lists and some special studies. This will add about 2,000 items.

3. Current Language Periodicals. Chief of these is American Speech, published since 1925. The first 7 volumes, being unindexed, will be read for inclusion in DARE. The indexes to later volumes will be selectively incorporated in the file. Other publications to be treated similarly will be American Notes and Queries, published since 1962, and Word Study, published since 1925. These should furnish at least 5,000 usable items.

4. Folklore Materials. Though a number of folklore journals have been read (Journal of the American Folklore Society, Western Folklore, Kentucky Folklore, Foxfire, and others) for matters treating regional and local language, DARE has been generously granted full access to the Center for the Study of Comparative Folklore and Mythology, directed by Professor Wayland Hand at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Hand's materials will be used for reference and consultation during the editing.

5. Regional American Literature. At least 500 novels, stories,

plays, and volumes of poetry not read for DAE or DA and covering the entire United States are being excerpted. This should add at least 25,000 items.

6. Wisconsin English Language Survey. From 1947-52 F. G. Cassidy and A. R. Duckert had a questionair of about 1,800 questions filled out by informants in 50 Wisconsin communities. These should add more than 90,000 items.

7. American Diaries. Thanks to a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, DARE was enabled to excerpt 115 American diaries (not read for DAE or DA) covering the period from 1640-1860. This source will add about 3,500 items to the file, many unrecorded before.

8. Fries Newspaper Clippings. In 1927-28 the late Professor Charles C. Fries made a collection of clippings from 266 newspapers of 48 states including only locally written news, editorials, advertising, etc. This was brought to Madison in 1969 and should add several thousand items.

9. P.A.D.S. 20 Questionair. The QR published in P.A.D.S. 20 by F. G. Cassidy and A. R. Duckert has been used in at least 6 communities. This source should add at least 10,000 items.

10. Occupational Terms. Professor Miles Hanley left in the ADS Collection about 1935 mimeographed lists of 13,331 terms from 97 occupations. This, with a number of other smaller occupational glossaries, should add at least 14,000 items.

11. Scientific Names. A large Natural History file has been made which cross-lists in both directions all the folk names for plants, animals, birds, insects, and fish which we have found, with their scientific names and the region or place where the folk names are in use. This unique reference tool will save much time during editing. It should also furnish several thousand items.

12. Miscellaneous. Contributions of all sorts, small single publications, written communications, etc. These should amount to perhaps 5,000 items.

The grand total of items in the file will be more than 2,500,000. By a very tentative estimate, the number of entries in the Dictionary should be over 100,000.

Computer Program. The computer program used by DARE was conceived and set up in 1965 by Dr. Richard Venezky, Department of Computer Sciences, University of Wisconsin. Essentially, all items are separately coded for recovery with associated information (word, pronunciation, meaning, example of use, source, data on source, notes) and can be treated statistically. Storage is on magnetic tapes, and input has been by scanning and by punch-cards. Only the normal difficulties have been encountered: because of machine changes at the UW Computing Center, we have been forced to shift from Control Data and INFOL to Univac 1108 and COBOL. But the system is now running satisfactorily.

Use Already Made of the DARE Collection. It may be mentioned in passing that at least ten doctoral dissertations have used or are using the DARE collection as a source: Chicago (O'Cain, Frazer), Florida (Rubrecht), Massachusetts (Carlson), Michigan (Reddington), New York (Greatman), Ohio (Clark, Keenan), Texas (Boyd), and Utah (Cook). All these people were DARE FWs.

Other DARE staff members have published articles or presented papers similarly: Drs. Duckert, Hartman, Udell, Venezky, and the present writer.

DARE has also furnished tapes, QRs, and information on many subjects to interested correspondents -- among others, to Mr. R. W. Burchfield, for the second Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, England), and to Professor Pierre Michel for the American Studies Centre, Royal Library, Brussels, Belgium.

PHASE 2 - Editing and Producing DARE.

When completed, the Dictionary of American Regional English is expected to have two distinct parts: 1. A conventional alphabetical word-list; 2. A summary of the data from the 1,000 QRs, made possible by computer processing.

Part 1. Each different word and phrase to be entered alphabetically. Related words may be treated together when convenient, but each will be entered separately if only to cross-refer.

So far as information permits, each entry will include:

Headword. In standard spelling. Words unrecorded before will be spelled by analogy with existing similar words.

Part of Speech. Indicated by the usual abbreviations.

Regional Range. Given in concise form here, with reference to maps or fuller detail given in Data Summary (Pt. 2).

Variant Spellings. From written sources. They will be simply listed here; quotations below will attest them.

Pronunciations. No pronunciation will be given unless it comes from an oral source, heard, recorded; none will be inferred from written sources. Broad IPA will be used.

Etymology. Only the proximate source, for easy words; fuller treatment where uncertainties or alternative possibilities exist. Reference to other dictionaries when pertinent, to the Linguistic Atlas, etc.

Cross-References. Placed wherever pertinent in the treatment. Many will be to further information in the Data Summary. As in OED and other dictionaries, also indicated typographically (with small capitals).

Definitions. When there is more than one sense, definitions will be numbered and given in presumed historical order. Reference to a "defining quot" may be used instead of a definition.

Usage Labels. Such conventional ones as are necessary; they will be placed to apply to the whole treatment or to only one sense, as appropriate. (The Data Summary's detailed treatment will give further basis for labels.)

Quotations. Taken directly from any source, dated and identified by author or speaker, book, page, etc.

Notes. Any pertinent further information, discussion, or the like.

Sample Entries

SLAUNCHWAYS, SLANCHWISE. Gen non-Std, also joc. → Data MM15. /'slɔnč-, 'slanč-, 'slants-, 'slanš-, + -ˌweɪz, -ˌwaɪz/ [OED slantwise 1573 on, slantways 1826 on.]

1. av. Slantwise, diagonally.

1904-22 wNC, eTN; Kephart Highlanders 368, Slaunchways denotes slanting. 1917 wNC, IL, KA, DN 417, Slaunchways. 1926 swMR, nwAK, Slaunchways. 1930 eWV, Slanchways. 1933 TX ADD, He wanted a full-width bed so that he could lie slaunchwise part of the time. 1936 neKY Stuart Uncle Fonse, He would pull the express about two corn-rows at a time coming up the bank slonchways. 1966 cAK, He nailed the board on slants-ways.

2. aj. Slanting, diagonal.

1923 swWI, Slawnch-wise.

See also antigodlin, kittycorner, skewgee, skywampus, slantindicular, slonching.

MANIAPORCHIA, n. Md. /ˌmænjəˈpɔrčə, -ˈpoučə/ [Old medical term mania a potu, mental derangement from drink]. (→ Data DD22)

A seizure due to excessive drinking. (Old fash).

Some Words Not Recorded in Existing Dictionaries Which DARE Will Treat:

agress, v., to get ahead in life, to overcome obstacles. (Minn.)
appearing-out clothes, n., one's best outfit. (Minn.)
back family, n., one's parents, as distinct from husband/wife and children. (Maine)
Basco, n., a person of Basque origin. (Oregon)
bladder, n., a hot-water bottle. (Minn.)
blue, v. intr., to bruise: "My skin blues easily." (N.C.)
cattail, n., a small creek. (N.C.)
chair buying - ordering goods from a catalog. (Minn.)
clam gun, n., a pronged device for gathering clams. (Wash.)
close-clapped, aj., chunkily built: "the close-clapped set of his body," (Ga.)
cone corn - dried husked corn on the cob. (Minn.)
cork high and bottle deep, aj. phr., drunk. (Ga.)
cut-hair - an American Indian who has taken to white-style farming. (Minn.)
finger-cap - a thimble. (Minn.)
gravels, n., gravel. (count noun for mass noun): "a handful of gravels." (Deep South)
grit, v., to roughen (the flesh): "It ain't good soap if it don't grit you." (Ga.)
jury - to act as a juryman, to judge exhibits (at a fair). (Minn.)
kettle cousin, n., "a kettle cousin, living around from relative to relative." (Ga.)
kish - a sluttish woman, a female slob. (Minn.)
lemoner - a citrus fruit squeezer. (Minn.)
mad-jam, n., excessive activity: "how you is, in a mad-jam all the time." (Ga.)
mercer girl, n., a woman brought from the East to the Pacific Northwest for marriage. (Wash.)
nerf - to nudge, push gently. (Minn.)
play the promise box, v. phr., make easy promises. (Ga.)
porcupine egg, n., a cocklebur. (Ariz.)
pose - to rest while traveling, especially portaging a canoe. (Minn.)
ribble, n., a small, crinkled bit of dough put into soups, etc. (Md.)
rimple - a ripple or wrinkle in the surface (of cloth, water, etc.) (Minn.)

scroop - a grating or sharp, squeaking sound. (Minn.)
sliding pond, n., a children's playground slide. (N.Y. City)
slipper spoon - a shoe-horn. (Minn.)
smig, n., uncomplimentary word for the face. (Ariz.)
snit - a small amount of liquor, less than a "shot". (Minn.)
stickler - a full "shot" of liquor. (Minn.)
stint, aj., very frugal. "She certainly is stint." (N.Y. City)
water stick - a carpenter's level. (Minn.)
whirligig - a small whirlwind or gust. (Minn.)
Yankee up, over - to make something old look better than it is in order to sell it. (Minn.)

Part 2 - Data Summary. The Data Summary will list: (1) The 1,000 communities in which the QR was completed with code abbreviations. (2) The INFs who answered the QRs, with the sections they answered, their individual code abbreviations, and the biographical facts about each (education, occupational category, age, race). (3) The broad geographical area, 1 out of 10, in which each INF's community falls. (4) A base map showing location of the 1,000 communities. This will be followed by each question of the QR with the answers it produced, given in descending order of frequency. A fictional sample of this follows:

A 1. What do you call the time in the early morning before the sun comes into sight?

Responses	No.	%	INFs Responding	Education G	H	C	Occupation	Age O	M	Y
dawn	863	97.6	All exc as below	552	301	10	0-321,1-413, 2-29,3-13, 4-47,5-12, 6-12,7-11, 8-0,9-5	601	238	24
twilight	13	1.5	CN5,IA11, MA22,OH2, NJ13,NY1, 33,58,OR7,8, RI3,WA3,WI14	5	5	3	0-8, 1-3, 4-2	8	4	1
dawning	4	.45	AL5,FL17, GA11,LA7	2	1	1	0-2,1-1, 4-1	3	1	0
before-day	4	.45	FL15,GA3, LA4,MP8	4	0	0	0-1,2-1, 5-1,7-1	2	2	0
No response	116	---		54	52	10	0-63,1-41 4-12	66	37	13
	1,000	100.00								

Finally, there will be, following each question and the digest of responses, a series of computer-made maps showing the distribution of alternate terms which pattern conspicuously and are therefore best seen in map form.

What is Needed to Edit and Complete DARE

1. Time. If the project continues without a serious break from the collecting phase and meets the target date of 1976, the editing must be finished in about 5 years (1970-75) to allow time for printing. The University of Wisconsin Press has expressed the desire to publish the Dictionary and has worked out tentative cost estimates for us.

2. Place. I have good assurance that the University of Wisconsin will continue to furnish the necessary space and support for student help.

3. Staff. At the beginning of the project Professor F. G. Cassidy was appointed Editor by the American Dialect Society; Dr. James Hartman will, it is hoped, continue as Associate Editor. Both should be teaching 1/3 time and editing 2/3 time. Other editors, part-time or full-time, will be needed, to the equivalent, probably, of three full-time editors, the editing to proceed for the full five years. The last fieldwork has now been completed; it should be pre-edited and taped for the computer by early 1971. Printouts can then be obtained and the materials of part 2 (the Data Summary) be tabulated, mapped, and treated statistically. The U. W. Press proposes to publish this part first, to make it available to scholars at once. The question of subsidy has not been raised at this point, but the feeling is that publication of part 2 would arouse interest and increase the demand for part 1, the main Dictionary.

   Other staff must include secretarial help, continuing as far as possible with personnel trained during the collecting phase; student clerical help; and a Programmer to handle the computer processing.

4. Computer Processing. Apart from staff, the chief expense will be for the cleanup, tabulations, maps, etc. of the Data Summary. This is the most difficult area in which to make an accurate cost estimate because a number of factors continue to change: availability of machines at the U. W. Computing Center, technological advances, the usual temporary breakdowns and slowups, and no way of testing how fast CRT editing can be performed before all the data is on tapes. However, a very rough estimate is offered. Our program will give capability for photo-printable printout and for tape-to-print, as well as maps showing distribution of alternative terms.

5. Other Expenses. Editing will involve a large volume of correspondence to local consultants in various parts of the country to check many doubtful points and get additional information. It will probably require some travel by a staff member to consult special collections and archives in other places.

We shall have to build up at once a collection of essential reference books (though we have a number already) including the existing historical, dialect, and special dictionaries, Linguistic Atlas publications, a full run of American Speech magazine and some minor ones; also major collections on special subjects with relevant vocabularies: folklore, folk arts, games, dance, crafts, cookery, tools, ethnobotany, occupational language, etc., all necessary to the working editor.

Summary

When I undertook to compile and edit DARE, in 1964, I pointed out that there were two pre-conditions to the success of such an undertaking: that it should be under full-time direction and editing, and that it must have adequate financial support. In other words, no work of this size and importance can be made in anyone's spare time, or on a shoestring.

Both these conditions have been met thus far, and by the end of Phase 1 it seems altogether likely that our goals for that part will have been achieved. We will be ready to continue without a break into Phase 2. The present direction is assured; we must now assure the necessary financial support.

F. G. Cassidy

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